

Planned site for Oregon Animal Sanctuary

BY RUTH AUSTIN

On a drive to Applegate Lake in the late spring of 2008, you might see a few horses, and perhaps some goats and a llama, grazing contentedly in the green pastures of Double Oak Farm, a few miles below the dam. The Farm, named after two "magnificent old white oaks" in the heart of the property, is the result of a vision of a group of local citizens to provide a sanctuary for abused and abandoned domestic and farm animals.

The animals you might see grazing on the land would be the fortunate ones, rescued from inhumane living conditions and brought to this Oregon Animal Sanctuary (OAS) to heal and, when possible, find new homes. They would come from law enforcement agencies (impounded abused animals), overwhelmed rescue groups, and from "death row" at our local animal shelters. The Sanctuary will not take in animals directly from the public.

The Sanctuary, like its initials OAS, is not only a planned *oasis* for animals to be restored to health, it is also to be a place of hope for people in need, and a farm whose products will feed the animals.

Lloyd Matthew Haines, the founding donor of OAS, is a long-time supporter of animal welfare

groups, including the local spay-neuter programs and pet adoption services, which he helped improve.

Robert Casserly, the general manager, was selected by Haines in 2006 to help him establish an organic farm and animal sanctuary with two principal goals:

"First, to create an ecofriendly farm where abused and abandoned farm animals and house pets that would otherwise be slaughtered or euthanized could live out their lives in peace and happiness. Second, to provide a place of hope and healing for people such as military veterans, people with

disabilities, cancer patients, abused children, and others who might benefit from animal-assisted therapy." (Note: Some misinformation was printed in a local newspaper about work with "at-risk offenders." Casserly advises that is not one of OAS's planned programs.)

Casserly's background includes growing up on an organic dairy farm in Wisconsin, a masters in management from Southern Oregon University, researching how animal sanctuaries are built and operated, and program manager for Friends of the Animal Shelter.

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Rescued horses will find solace on Double Oak Farm pasture.



OAS plans to partner with agencies that can help heal people through interaction with animals. The Kerulos Center, with well-known Drs. Gay Bradshaw and Jeff Borchers, is working with OAS regarding innovative programs to help military veterans. We know of the healing of autistic children by learning horsemanship, and of hospital patients and the elderly having their spirits lifted by small animal interaction (and their blood pressure lowered, too!).

"Double Oak Farm is committed to becoming a model of how organic, sustainable agriculture can

help preserve the natural beauty of the Applegate Valley while meeting the needs of the animals and people who live on the land. We would welcome help and advice from anyone familiar with permaculture or ecofriendly construction to help make our little piece of the valley healthier and even more beautiful for the next generation to enjoy. We will not use pesticides or chemical fertilizer, will reduce energy by installing solar panels, will compost the animals manure so it becomes black-gold soil, and be the best land stewards we can be," explains Casserly. Double Oak Farm does not border directly on the Applegate River, but does have a pristine creek running through the property. There also is a large irrigated pasture, and year-round spring water. Casserly says they plan to grow slowly and carefully and "make sure we do things right."

As an example, OAS is pursuing the construction of "sound-proof" dog housing so that residents near this 55-acre farm will not be disturbed at night. "But before we can construct dog or cat housing, we have to get a special permit from Jackson County. This usually takes several months and there's no indication as to when we might receive the permit," Casserly explained.

Public response has been tremendous—"positive and encouraging," said Casserly. From a waiting list of people wanting to volunteer, pets being put in their owners' wills so that pets can be cared for after owners pass away, local veterinarians offering services, interested persons wanting to join the board of directors or advisory board, to offers of partnerships with human-service agencies—all are coming in to the office.

More help is needed to make OAS a success when it plans to open in March. Construction is in progress. With generosity, Architect John Duffie has designed cage-free and ecofriendly barns.

VOLUNTEERS:

Contact Robert Casserly to help with construction of barns or infrastructure, and to assist in the spring with a variety of duties from gardening, landscaping, animal care, to visiting local nursing homes or schools with specially trained animals. Clerical and fund-raising assistance is needed.

EQUIPMENT DONATIONS:

Needed items are field fencing, irrigation equipment, barn construction supplies, clean fill dirt, a farm tractor and other farm equipment. These are donations that can be written off—as Robert says, "a win-win situation!"

MONETARY DONATIONS:

All donations to Oregon Animal Sanctuary are tax-deductible. It gained its status as a nonprofit in September of 2007. Naming donations (a building) can be made for both individuals and businesses that care to make a special gift.

There is a lot of work to be done. An old adage reminds us that "a society can be judged by how it treats the least of it." Our animal friends give us food and clothing, comfort and nurture us in times of stress, and selflessly want only sustenance and to be our companion. We owe them sanctuary.



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The Oregon Animal Sanctuary is opening this spring in the Applegate. Founded by Applegate and Rogue Valley residents, the sanctuary will be a place of safety and comfort for a wide variety of domesticated animals. It will also be a place of healing for us human types.

Can you help with a donation? Any amount will be greatly appreciated. Large donors are eligible to name buildings in honor of a loved one, and will officially be thought of as neat people. We're a 501(c)(3) so your donation is tax deductible. (Tax ID # 20-8982518)

Learn more about the Oregon Animal Sanctuary at www.OregonAnimalSanctuary.org, or call 541-482-9300.

Please send your donation to:
Oregon Animal Sanctuary
96 North Main Street #202
Ashland, OR 97520



OREGON ANIMAL SANCTUARY

A safe place for animals, a healing place for people.

For more information, go to www.oregonanimalsanctuary.org or email oregonanimalsanctuary@gmail.com.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Oregon Animal Sanctuary is a nonprofit, eco-friendly farm dedicated to rescuing homeless domesticated animals. We will place as many animals as possible in good homes and the others will live out their lives in a safe and loving environment. We are dedicated to nurturing the human-animal bond by involving the community, including youth, people with disabilities and senior citizens, in working with and learning about the humane treatment of animals and the physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits of human-animal interaction.

Touring, Volunteer and Donation Information

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